Urban development and urban water supply financing corporation

2207. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to set up an Urban Development and Urban Water Supply Financing Corporation;

(b) if so, what are the aims and objects of the proposed Corporation; and

(c) whether it is likely to function independently of the Technology Mission on drinking water, if so, the jurisdiction of the Corporation and the extent of financial assistance likely to be provided by the Corporation to the local authorities in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (c) With a view to extending technical help and guidance as well as long term finance to the Municipal bodies and local authorities in the country for the formulation and implementation of Urban Infrastructure Development Projects relating to Water Supply, Sewerage, Sanitation and other Urban Services, a proposal to set up an Urban Development and Urban Water Supply financing Corporation is under the consideration of the Government. In the Central Sector of the 7th Five Year Plan, there is a provision of Rs. 55 crores for the setting up of this Corporation.

Death due to contaminated drinking water in West Bengal

2208. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the *Hindustan Times* of the 7th April, 1987 to the effect that chronic arsenic poisoning caused by drinking of contaminated tube well water had led to three deaths and caused various diseases including cancer among several people in the five districts of West Bengal;

(b) whether it is also a fact that more than 200 people in that State have developed skin diseases; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAMANAND YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. However, no report of any death or cancer arising out of Arsenical Dermatosis has been received.

(b) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that more than two hundred people have been affected by arsenical dermatosis.

(c) A team of Scientists and doctors of the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health and the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta made joint field surveys and conducted investigations in the reported areas. The team inferred that dermatosis cases were due to cumulative affect of arsenic being present in drinking water from shallow tubewells beyond admissible level. A High Powered Committee under the Chairmanship of the Director, Health Services, West Bengal with representatives from State Public Health Engineering Department, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta etc was formed. The Committee after visiting the reported areas and examining water samples, strainers of shallow tubewells and soil samples found the presence of Arsenic. No definite inference about the source of arsenic causing the malady could yet be drawn. The Committee, recommended rejection of shallow tubewells and installation of deep tubewells and polythene lined tubewells in the affected areas. Instructions for sinking of deep tubewells to provide safe drinking water in affected areas have been issued by the State Government. Suspect shallow